

## Request for Council Action

Originator Planning	Item <b>South Loop District AUAR Update</b>
Agenda Section Study	Date 10/10/2016
Description	

In 2002, the City adopted an Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) for the South Loop District. An AUAR is a substitute form of environmental assessment that considers the cumulative impacts of anticipated future development in a defined area like the South Loop. Because the AUAR studies the cumulative environmental impacts of multiple development proposals, individual Environmental Assessment Worksheets (EAW) or Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) are not required to be prepared for development proposals covered by the AUAR. This helps streamline the review of future development projects and provides for a more coordinated and comprehensive review of potential impacts of overall development in the context of a larger area, rather than incremental review of impacts related to development on a single site.

The AUAR process is regulated under Minnesota Rules Chapter 4410.3610, Subpart 1. These rules prescribe the information required in the environmental review and the official review process, which includes review by a number of Federal, State and regional agencies. To remain effective, the AUAR must be updated every five years or when development or infrastructure projects are proposed that were not anticipated in the original AUAR.

The South Loop AUAR was updated in 2009 and 2012. Both of these updates were minor, because relatively little of the development projected in 2002 had occurred, in part due to the recession. However, several infrastructure projects were implemented that were not reviewed in the 2002 AUAR, such as the extension of Lindau Lane east of 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The focus of previous interim updates was to incorporate these unforeseen projects.

The current update is intended to be more comprehensive and will incorporate the findings from updates to the South Loop District traffic study and sewer and water utility models. It also identifies several new sites projected to redevelop by 2040 that were not anticipated in 2002. For example, the 2002 AUAR did not expect the five “Alpha” warehouse parcels acquired by the City/Port Authority in 2010 to redevelop. In addition, due to shifts in the economy and development markets, the types (less retail and office; more hotel and residential) and overall amount of development assumed by 2040 is less than originally assumed in the 2002 AUAR. As such, the 2002 AUAR development scenario remains the “worst case” scenario for many of the environmental impacts assessed in the AUAR.

At the study session, staff will answer questions about the AUAR update and review the update schedule.

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### Requested Action

Information only. This update is intended to provide City Council an opportunity to comment and ask questions about the AUAR and the update process. The City Council will need to formally approve the release of the draft update for agency review at a regular meeting in January 2017.

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### Attachments: